

in the world, and not look like a bad episode of “Survivor.” [*Laughter*]

It is clear we need to improve the process for confirming qualified judicial nominees. This process will always be somewhat contentious. But there are a few things that the American people expect us to agree on. First, the American people expect nominees and their families to be treated with dignity. Nominees should not have to wait years for the up-or-down vote that the Senate owes them.

The American people expect their elected officials to do the job of screening judicial nominees. We should not cede to any one legal association the exclusive power to veto a nominee before he or she can make their case to Members of the Senate.

The American people expect the nomination process to be as free of partisanship as possible, and for Senators to rive [*rise*]^{*} above tricks and gimmicks designed to thwart nominees. For example, Senators have invented a new rule that bans the election-year confirmation of anyone not considered a consensus nominee, with consensus defined as only the nominees they happen to choose. In the end, the people hurt most by these partisan maneuvers are the American people. And that is not what our Founders intended, and Presidents and Senators from both parties ought to say so.

In Washington, it can be easy to get caught up in the politics of the moment. Yet if we do not act to improve the confirmation process, those who are today deploying harmful tactics and maneuvers to thwart nominees will sooner or later find the tables turned. There are things more important, even in Washington, than politics as usual.

Next month, the Senate will hold a lame duck session to finish their legislative business for the year. One item that should be at the top of their agenda is a long list of qualified judicial nominees still waiting for Senate action. If Democrats truly seek a more productive and cooperative relationship in Washington, then they have a perfect opportunity to prove it, by giving these nominees the up-or-down vote they deserve.

^{*} White House correction.

Our democracy requires us to come together and to get things done for the citizens of this great republic. I’m confident we can do that. And I’m grateful that there are dedicated people like you all who are working so hard to help us put good judges on the courts, and equally important, to help invest the American people in the process.

I salute you for your good work. Appreciate the chance to come and visit with you. May God bless you. And may God bless the American people.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:02 p.m. at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to Peter W. Schramm, executive director, Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs, Ashland University, who introduced the President; former U.S. Solicitor General Paul D. Clement; and former secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell of Ohio. He also referred to H.R. 1424, approved October 3, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–343. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Memorandum on Waiver of Restriction on Providing Funds to the Palestinian Authority

October 6, 2008

Presidential Determination No. 2009–02

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Restriction on Providing Funds to the Palestinian Authority

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 650(b) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008 (Division J, Public Law 110–161) (the “Act”), as carried forward under section 1417 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252) (the “Supplemental”), I hereby certify that it is important to the national security interests of the United States to waive the provisions of section 650(a) of the Act, as carried forward under the Supplemental, in order to provide funds appropriated for fiscal year 2009 under the heading Economic Support Funds to the Palestinian Authority.

You are directed to transmit this determination to the Congress, with a report pursuant to section 650(d) of the Act, as carried forward under the Supplemental, and to publish the determination in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 14, 2008]

NOTE: This memorandum will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 15.

Remarks Honoring the 2008 United States Summer Olympic and Paralympic Teams
October 7, 2008

The President. Thank you. Welcome. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. This is a special day for the White House. Laura and I are proud to welcome the greatest Olympic and Paralympic team ever assembled. And I bring greetings from the honorary captain of the Olympic teams, President George H.W. Bush; we call him 41.

I want to thank the members of the Cabinet who are here, and the administration. I want to thank the coaches and the team leaders, and the U.S. Olympic Committee leadership and staff for being here. We welcome the representatives of Chicago 2016 who are here. Members of the U.S. Armed Forces; moms, dads, girlfriends, boyfriends, supporters of the mighty Olympic team, we're glad you're here.

I do want to welcome members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports—

Audience member. Whoo! [Laughter]

The President. —including John Burke, the Chairman; Dot Richardson, the Vice Chairman—by the way, member of the 1996 and 2000 U.S. Olympic gold medal softball teams. And the reason I want to mention them is today the Health and Human Services is issuing its Physical Fitness Guidelines, and there's no better time to remind our fellow citizens that physical fitness will lead to a healthy America. Just look what's happened

to the people surrounding me. [Laughter] And so we urge our fellow citizens to look at these guidelines and to take time out of your days to exercise. Now, not every one of you has to ride a mountain bike, but if you walk just 20 minutes a day you'll help America and help yourself.

Attending the Beijing Olympics was one of the great experiences of our lifetime. Laura and I had a fantastic experience. We will never forget the first night at the Bird's Nest for the spectacular opening ceremony. When the Team USA was announced, there was a notable increase in the cheers. And then came the greatest sight of all—more than 500 America's—of America's finest athletes marching behind our flag, carried by Bernard Lagat [Lopez Lomong].* It was an incredible sight, and I know it was a moment that all of our athletes looked forward to, and it's a moment that we were so honored to share with you.

In the weeks that followed, our Olympic team took part in the largest games ever held. Over 100,000 [10,000]* athletes competed in more than 300 events. An unprecedented 87 countries brought home medals. Forty-three world records were broken. About 4.7 billion viewers watched the Olympics.

And with the eyes of the world turned on Beijing, our teams rose to the occasion. The Olympic team finished with the top medal count of 110 medals.

But more impressive was the decency and character that these Olympics brought on the world stage. I know you worked hard—the Olympics and Paralympic teams worked hard to get to this moment. Whether you won a medal or not, it really doesn't matter in the long run. What really matters is the honor you brought to your sports and to your families and to your country.

And we thank you for the lasting memories that you gave us all. And so here are some of the lasting memories that I will take with me forever. First of all, the Water Cube—watching Jason Lezak touch out I think it was the French team—[laughter]—on the 4x100 freestyle relay, and then watching the joy of his teammates, including Michael Phelps.

* White House correction.